



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
FORT WORTH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
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REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

June 13, 2005

Planning, Environmental, and Regulatory Division

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, FORT WORTH DISTRICT
Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Upper Trinity River, Fort Worth,
Central City, Fort Worth, Texas

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Fort Worth District has prepared a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) addressing proposed activities to provide flood damage reduction, ecosystem improvement, recreation, and urban revitalization within the Upper Trinity River Basin, Trinity River, Central City, Fort Worth, Texas.

Authority. This Notice of Availability is being issued to interested parties in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, Public Law 91-190, as amended, and the implementing regulations in Engineering Regulation 200-2-2.

Purpose and Background. Between 2000 and 2003, a comprehensive plan was developed by a consortium of local entities for the 88 miles of the Upper Trinity River and its major tributaries within the greater Fort Worth area. An early product of this comprehensive planning effort was recognition of the unique urban characteristics and opportunities within the Central City Segment of the river. The Central City Study Area is bounded generally by the Fort Worth Stockyards to the North, University Drive to the West, I-30 to the South, and Sylvania Avenue to the East. In October 2004 the Study Area was expanded upstream on the West Fork of the Trinity River. The study area has undergone extensive alterations in the past 50 years due to extensive urbanization, construction of flood control, channelization/levee projects, and numerous smaller projects that have affected the physical characteristics of the Upper Trinity River watershed. The focus of this EIS was to evaluate potential modifications to the existing system of levees and channels that would protect or enhance existing levels of flood protection, restore components of the natural riverine system that were sacrificed in the construction of the existing flood control system, facilitate urban revitalization, and provide major quality-of-life enhancements for citizens of the region.

Proposed Actions and Alternatives. In addition to the No Action, two action alternatives are presented in this Draft EIS. The two action alternatives share three common objectives, flood protection, ecosystem improvement, and recreation. One additional objective was associated with providing urban revitalization opportunities; only one action alternative was formulated with this purpose in addition to the three common purposes. The action alternatives were developed under two parallel formulation strategies. Development of the Principles and Guidelines (P&G) Based Alternative followed the principles, standards, and procedures outlined in the Water Resources Council's "Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water Related Land Resources Implementation Studies". The strategies presented in that document provide the basis for Corps planning activities. The Community Based Alternative was formulated with a broader community input based approach, which included extensive public participation with unconstrained development of goals and objectives. The result of these two different planning

processes led to the development of two very different plans for addressing the problems and opportunities of the study area.

Under the No Action Alternative, which is equivalent to the description of the future without-project condition, no measures would be taken to address the objectives and goals developed for flood protection, environmental improvement, urban revitalization, or recreation. The estimated annual flood losses in the future without-project condition were \$500,100 (July 2003 prices). This represents an almost 50% increase in the Total Expected Annual Damages over the existing condition. While environmental conditions between the levees of the floodway would remain the same, the environmental conditions in locations outside the floodway would continue to degrade. With the No Action Alternative, land use in the immediate project area would remain at levels significantly less productive than those of surrounding portions of the study area. Finally, there is an existing shortfall in recreational facilities available for the current population of Fort Worth, and under the future without-project condition that shortfall would increase.

The P&G Based Alternative includes levee raises along portions of the existing channel to bring the system within the study area into compliance with Corridor Development Certificate (CDC) criteria, and return the flood protection levels to the original design criteria of standard project flood (SPF)+4 foot. This alternative provides approximately \$230,000 in expected annual flood damage reduction benefits. This alternative does not provide any improvements to the existing interior drainage problems. The ecosystem improvement component of the P&G Based Alternative would provide approximately 56 acres of riparian woodland development, and 65 acres of existing riparian corridor would be improved. These riparian woodland measures would increase riparian habitat outputs by 38.5 Average Annual Habitat Unit (AAHUs) over the No Action Alternative. Approximately 22 acres of new wetlands would be developed and approximately 3 acres would be improved, providing an additional 21.8 AAHUs over the future without-project condition. Two historic meanders which were disconnected from the main channel would be reconnected to provide approximately 2.5 acres of scarce riverine habitat and add 2.2 AAHUs to the output of the aquatic community. The P&G Based Alternative would also include 1.5 acres of slope restoration involving shrub plantings to restore the new channel slopes of the restored meanders. Recreation features included in the P&G Alternative provide for approximately 7,800 linear feet of new multipurpose trail which would link the southern end of the study area to the Trinity Trail System. Other amenities would include four new trail heads, self-guided interpretive signage, mile marker signage, and six benches. Less than one mile of existing trail would need to be replaced due to disturbance to construct this alternative.

The Community Based Alternative would provide SPF+4 feet of protection through construction of a bypass channel extending just downstream of Fifth Street on the Clear Fork to just upstream of Northside Drive on the West Fork, approximately 8,400 feet in length and 300 – 400 feet wide between the top of the levees. Three isolation gates designed to restrict flood flows to the new bypass channel and to isolate the interior area from flood flows would be constructed. This alternative would provide the same magnitude of economic benefit for flood damage reduction as the P&G Based Alternative; however, the hydraulic efficiency of the bypass channel also improves the interior drainage problems which exist in the system. Damages associated with the 50-year event for sump 26 (\$773,500) and the 100-year event (\$4,846,900) would be eliminated. Twenty acres currently within sump 16W would be raised above the elevation of the 100-year event. University Drive between the West Fork and Jacksboro Highway and Henderson Street in the vicinity of White Settlement Road and the Fort Worth and Western Railroad would be raised out of the 100-year floodplain.

Additional urban design features which would enhance the urban revitalization potential of the area include a dam on the West Fork, approximately 1,100 feet downstream of Samuels Avenue, designed to create a normal water surface elevation of approximately 525 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD) and an interior water feature approximately 900 feet in length at the confluence area of the Clear

Fork and West Fork Channels. The ecosystem improvement components of this plan will be accomplished primarily in the areas proposed for valley storage mitigation following excavation. In addition to restoring 5 acres and 4.3 AAHUs of riverine habitat through the reconnection of two historic river meanders, the Community Based Alternative would improve the quality of the future wetland values by 12.5 AAHUs while providing approximately 6.2 additional acres. The quality and quantity of riparian woodlands would be increased by 42.1 AAHUs and an additional 85 acres over the without-project condition. There would also be approximately 118 acres of additional surface water created by the Samuels Avenue Dam and interior water feature. Recreational features of the Community Based Alternative would enhance river accessibility by providing approximately 10 miles of waterfront trails, 2 new pedestrian bridges, and approximately 3.5 miles of contiguous boating loop. Three new vehicular bridges would be required to maintain existing traffic flows to and through the area. These bridges would provide access over the bypass channel for North Main Street, Henderson Street, and White Settlement Road and the Henderson Street and White Settlement Road bridges would improve safety due to grade separations with the Fort Worth and Western Railroad.

After careful consideration of the impacts associated with the three presented alternatives, the Community Based Alternative is recommended for implementation, subject to additional feedback and comments received as a result of agency and public review. The Community Based Alternative addresses all four project objectives, i.e. flood protection, ecosystem improvement, urban revitalization, and recreation. This alternative provides the design level of protection within the study area, and improves the performance of the interior drainage components, reducing damages associated with the 100-year flood event for sumps 16W and 26. By following the valley storage mitigation outlined below, the proposal fully complies with the criteria established in the CDC process, and, in fact, exceeds the criteria relative to mitigation of valley storage for the SPF volume. Construction of the bypass channel would require mitigation of valley storage to compensate for its increased conveyance efficiency. Hydraulic analysis quantified the approximate volume of valley storage that would be lost as 5,250 acre-feet (8.47 million cubic yards) without mitigation. Of this, an estimated 2,850 acre-feet would be lost due to creation of the shorter bypass channel (versus existing river channel) and approximately 2,400 acre-feet of valley storage would be lost due to drawdown.

The identified valley storage losses would be mitigated by the following measures:

- Partial levee removal and excavation in the Riverbend site approximately three miles upstream of University Drive;
- Excavation of additional sites immediately downstream of Samuels Avenue Dam, and adjacent to Interstate Highway 35; and
- Modification of the University Drive roadway embankment, north of the bridge over the West Fork

In combination, these measures have been verified to fully mitigate for 100 percent of the valley storage inputs, in full compliance with CDC criteria and exceeding the criteria relative to mitigation of valley storage for the SPF volume.

Implementation of the Community Based Alternative would initially result in losses to wetlands, riparian woodlands, and upland woodlands primarily due to excavation in the hydraulic mitigation site(s). However, with subsequent habitat development in these areas, these impacts would be compensated. Additionally, the Community Based Alternative would fill the lowermost 400 linear feet of Lebow Creek in order to prevent inundation to the upper reaches and associated effects to the 100-year water surface elevation. Raising the water surface elevation to 525 National Geodetic Vertical Datum by construction of Samuels Avenue Dam would inundate stream habitat in Marine Creek. This aquatic habitat in Marine and Lebow Creeks has been assessed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife as being exceptional during some times of the year.

USACE is currently coordinating with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and local sponsors (Tarrant Regional Water District) to develop a plan to mitigate the impacts to Marine and Lebow Creeks. Mitigation measures under evaluation include providing additional flow to the mid-reach of Lebow Creek, improving aquatic habitat by modifying the existing channel, and creating aquatic habitat in the rerouted Lebow Creek channel. Other sites are also being investigated, including additional instream aquatic habitat via structural modifications to Marine Creek above Main Street and developing a riparian corridor along an unnamed tributary to the West Fork that flows through Harmon Field Park east of I-35. The USACE and the local sponsors have committed to completion of a compensatory mitigation plan for impacts to Marine Creek and Lebow Creek stream habitat prior to the completion of the NEPA process.

Public Meeting. It is anticipated that public meetings will be held the 26th and 27th of July 2005. Specific locations, times and exact dates for public meetings will be posted on the Corps of Engineers <http://www.swf.usace.army.mil/> and Tarrant Regional Water District's <http://www.trinityrivervision.org> websites as well as in a local press release.

The official closing date for the receipt of comments is 45 days from the date on which the Notice of Availability of the draft EIS appears in the *Federal Register*, which is anticipated to be on 24 June 2005.

Copies of the draft Environmental Impact Statement are available for review at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, P.O. Box 17300, 819 Taylor Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76102-0300. Copies have also been distributed to the main libraries in Fort Worth, Texas. The main text of the draft EIS is also available for review on the Fort Worth District Internet Home Page at <http://www.swf.usace.army.mil/>. For further information, contact Dr. Rebecca Griffith, at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Attention: CESWF-PER-P, P.O. Box 17300, Fort Worth, Texas 76102-0300, telephone (817) 886-1820.

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